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From: Ham-Policy Mailing List and Newsgroup <ham-policy@ucsd.edu>
Errors-To: Ham-Policy-Errors@UCSD.Edu
Reply-To: Ham-Policy@UCSD.Edu
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Subject: Ham-Policy Digest V94 #282
To: Ham-Policy

Ham-Policy Digest Fri, 24 Jun 94 Volume 94 : Issue 282

Today's Topics:

CW...hear, touch, simplicity

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Send subscription requests to: <Ham-Policy-REQUEST@UCSD.Edu>
Problems you can't solve otherwise to brian@ucsd.edu.

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herein consists of personal comments and does not represent the official
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Date: Thu, 23 Jun 1994 20:12:23 GMT
From: lll-winken.llnl.gov!uwm.edu!mixcom.com!kevin.jessup@ames.arpa
Subject: CW...hear, touch, simplicity
To: ham-policy@ucsd.edu

IN Newsgroup: rec.radio.amateur.policy,
gganderson@augustana.edu (Kevin Anderson -7325) writes...

>Subject: CW...hear, touch, simplicity
>
>I like radio that is simple. I don't mean here radio that
>is simple in a modern appliance operator-type means, with
>pushbutton control of everything and digital this-and-that,
>but in radio that is simple on the "inside" as well in
>concept. I like radio that *I* can hear, that I turn the
>dial to hear, that I swing an iron to make, and not radio
>where I rely on a screen or computer or silicon this-and-that.

Nothing is simple. It's a question of how far "down" you go before you ignore the next layer (and all it's complexity) and pretend you have an understanding of the entire system. When you get to that point (or allow yourself to accept that you can't possibly understand EVERYTHING)

you walk away feeling fat, dumb, happy, warm and fuzzy. This is NOT a flame.

Even if you communicate using only simple, home-brew CW "systems", you have probably chosen to ignore the next layer: the entirely complex and mathematical field of electromagnetic wave radiation. Ever take a college level course in electromagnetic fields? You probably wouldn't enjoy it. I didn't.

People feel comfortable with what they know. What they don't know scares them. As a radio amateur, you probably stopped worrying about what was happening after the signal left your antenna (other than basic band conditions and RF propagation). You accepted that RF waves somehow traveled to their destination and that was that.

As digital modulation techniques advance (this is MSEE or PhD stuff), radio users (and radio amateurs) will have to accept the fact that they cannot understand every last aspect of modulation techniques and move up to the next level: what do we do with the data once that lower layer (that we do not entirely understand) has given it to us? This is where the radio merges with the computer and you can start talking about networking, files, user interfaces, multimedia data transfer and the like.

Even today, most radio amateurs have only a block-diagram understanding (if that!) of radio receivers and transmitters. Even the components of CW transmitters are ignored. Do you really understand the physics behind a transistor?? I don't. Not really. And I don't care. I read the specs and apply them. I don't care how or why they do what they do (more or less). What IS important is that they perform as advertised when properly applied.

It's kind of like when IC's came along and started eliminating discrete components (transistors, diodes, resistors) in many digital applications. Then came the microprocessor and things really started moving. Then ASICs and hybrids. And on and on. Ever greater scales of integration. Hardware was even replaced by (gasp) software!

I feel radio will soon see the same revolution that computers went through when Intel first released the microprocessor. We now have dedicated DSP processors and pretty cool development tools for applying DSP to unique applications. In radio, digital signal processing will take over more and more of the IF filtering and VFO access. We will also see more digital wide-band data via RF rather than narrow band analog.

It's all very confusing to those who, for whatever reason, are not keeping up. My point is that the average user does not have to.

Amateur radio, on the other hand, has always had at least SOME grasp of the technology behind it all. It is my belief that as commercial RF advances, we should at least be a bit more cognizant of what they are doing (if only at the black-box level) and why they are doing it.

How many people in technical disciplines who ignored the computer revolution are still employed today? I submit the same will soon happen to radio communication. Except rather than losing your job, you'll lose your spectrum.

>The problem I see
>with the push forward of technology is that it quickly removes
>simplicity from everything. Oh, the computer may do more for
>you in controlling your radio, and you might end up with fewer
>buttons to push (although the opposite seems to be the case with
>today's appliance ham radios in that there are more and more
>buttons to push for every conceivable permutation of operation),
>so it seems simpler, but in fact things get more complicated.

I know what you mean. I still prefer to drive a car with a standard transmission and change my own oil and spark plugs. Despite my own personal feelings, technology marches on.

You should read other Internet groups such as the cyberspace and cyberpunk groups! As I've said before, the future will not be concerned so much with the METHOD of moving the data as with the data content itself. Wait till everyone has a virtual reality headset with a spread spectrum link to the world-wide network ozone! Ever see the movie brainstorm? Put that together with portable RF! Awesome!! That may even be MY breaking point and I'll have to resort to a good ol' CW QSO to get back to reality!

>One problem with technology moving forward is that the solution
>or next step is almost always more complicated/sophisticated than
>the previous level.

As they say, "the more you learn, the more you realize you do not know!"

>Technological and
>environmental "fixes" always end up being more sophisticated,
>costing more than previous methods, and more "damaging" in the
>end.

Well, I really don't think more efficient modulation techniques are going to "damage" the airwaves.

>I personally like to tune and hear the
>radio, and rely on my own wits and know-how to understand the
>message, and not rely upon the "hidden" radio or other means to do so.

Refer back to what I said about "levels".

>End of ramblings on a rainy (finally!) Thursday morning in
>Middle America, in one of Charles Kuralt's favorite Illinois/Iowa
>communities.... Cheers.

>

>73 DE KB9IUA, Kevin

I really enjoyed reading that! I probably will get beyond the 5 WPM CW someday. May even enjoy it. But for now, I'm content with my world of landline computer networks via coax and reliable local communication via packet and repeaters. And I am forever grateful to those radio amateurs before me who pushed for the elimination of code (above 30 MHz) so that I could become a part of amateur radio.

73 and have a happy field day! Guess I'll finally get to do some HF after all. Our club call here in Ozaukee County, Wisconsin is W9CQO. We alternately may be using AA9W or WI9M. Maybe I'll finally get a chance to talk to some of you! I promise I won't talk about theory! ;-))

--
/`-_ kevin.jessup@mixcom.com | Vote Libertarian!
{ }/
\ / N9SQB, ARRL, Amateur Radio | Call 1-800-682-1776
|__*| N9SQB @ WA9POV.#MKE.WI.USA.NA | for more information.

Date: Thu, 23 Jun 1994 20:41:41 GMT
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References <9WK0kexTYV8F063yn@nyx10.cs.du.edu>, <061894035927Rnf0.78@amcomp.com>, <mahjmacCrLM3z.M5I@netcom.com>
Subject : Re: license turnaround times..

In <mahjmacCrLM3z.M5I@netcom.com> mahjmac@netcom.com (Michael A. Hotz) writes:

>Michael
>KB8STS (Finally!)

>Interesting note, my Operator Privileges section says TECH PLUS, which I
>am, so it looks like they DID change the license to reflect the additional

>privileges.

>73 (Is that right?)

No! You forgot to put the "S" after it!!! ;-)) 73s! Lottsof'em!! :-))

Welcome to the hobby!

--
/`_- kevin.jessup@mixcom.com | Vote Libertarian!
{ }/
\ / N9SQB, ARRL, Amateur Radio | Call 1-800-682-1776
|__*| N9SQB @ WA9POV.#MKE.WI.USA.NA | for more information.

Date: 23 Jun 1994 22:40:05 GMT

From: ihnp4.ucsd.edu!usc!howland.reston.ans.net!vixen.cso.uiuc.edu!
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To: ham-policy@ucsd.edu

References <gganderson.465.0@augustana.edu>, <2uck1b\$1nd@chnews.intel.com>, <2ucmad\$p2r@abyss.West.Sun.COM>edu
Subject : Re: voice (was CW...hear, touch, simplicity)

In article <2ucmad\$p2r@abyss.West.Sun.COM> myers@bigboy.West.Sun.COM (Dana Myers) writes:

>In article <2uck1b\$1nd@chnews.intel.com> jbromley@sedona.ch.intel.com (Jim
Bromley, W5GYJ) writes:
>>In article <gganderson.465.0@augustana.edu>,
>>Kevin Anderson, KB9IUA <gganderson@augustana.edu> wrote:
>>
>>>I like radio that is simple...
>>
>>>CW is simple...
>>
>>>I'm not speaking necessarily pro or con CW only (although I lean
>>to pro CW much more so)...
>>
>>Some of the absolutely simplest radios I have ever seen were the
>>single-band SSB transceivers made by Swan and Heathkit back in the
>>60's. And, in the Heathkit case, you could build them yourself and
>>get them working with only a VOM. They were completely frill-less,
>>but very functional.
>
>True. And, if simplicity of communication is a virtue, simply picking
>up a microphone and speaking is simpler than using CW. The vast majority

>of people can use phone with no special training.

>

I acknowledge that listening to voice (whether AM or SSB) is technologically simple. Regen sets can do it, and they are simple. And talking is easy (far easier than typing this note -- what mind to hand/finger coordination I need).

But we don't leave it at that. We add filters (audio or IF, likely both), DSP. That was part of my point -- we always solve irritations by adding more technology. Commercially we are pushed. The desire for user ease starts it, but eventually the base of expected technology rises. And I become further removed from simplicity. Now you can have your advanced technology and I can have my simple technology at the same time, but only to a point, as the parts or equipment I need eventually disappears. And the types of radio signals may (I say may) disappear, either by choice or by force. Another example: how many early 2m HTs are usable today with DTMF and other coding on repeaters? (I'm not an authority on this, as I don't deal with 2meters, but I don't see any hams at my club or at hamfests carrying earlier HTs, so I have to wonder....sure, the new ones are much lighter and smaller!)

Technological "improvements" keep coming and equipment more-or-less gets more affordable to people, but must technology always improve, and who is disadvantaged along the way?

>Some folks tout the "exclusivity" of CW as an advantage. Hmmph.

>If it was simple, it wouldn't be exclusive.

>

>:-)

I see and acknowledge your smiley. And I did not bring up the idea of exclusive. As for CW being simple, I was not referring to the ease/hardness of learning Morse Code, I was only referring to equipment. I acknowledge that learning CW is hard to many, and viewed by many as being a wasteful use of brain cells. :-) And receiving CW is not necessarily easy, as you need a stable LO capable of operating within 1000 Hz of the signal you are trying to receive.

Chipsets certainly simplify the building of a receiver (witness the ease at building a DC set with NE602s, etc.), but it is a disguised simplicity. Disguised in how complicated those chips really are inside. I used the phrase "environmentally damaging" in my original post to refer to the hidden damages due to chemicals used to produce our current ICs, the increased use

of electricity overall by "modern" life, and by the quickness by which older (almost new in some cases) equipment becomes obsolete, rendering all the energy and resources used to produce that equipment as wasted.

Just more wondering thoughts on this thread that is really not amateur radio policy, so I will end this unless you wish to continue :-).

73 SK DE KB9IUA, Kevin

*
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* *

End of Ham-Policy Digest V94 #282
